1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
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reference to the phases of the moon: new moon, its waxing, full moon, its waning, and the brightness of its second quarter. When they wish to be precise they state on which night of the waxing or waning an event will take place, reckoning fifteen nights to each and thirty to the month. They say that only cattle and the Anuak can see the moon in its invisible period. The only terms applied to the nightly succession of lunar phases are those that describe its appearance just before, and in, fullness.

The course of the sun determines many points of reference, and a common way of indicating the time of events is by pointing to that part of the heavens the sun will then have reached in its course. There are also a number of expressions, varying in the degree of their precision, which describe positions of the sun in the heavens, though, in my experience, the only ones commonly employed are those that refer to its more conspicuously differentiated movements: the first stroke of dawn, sunrise, noon, and sunset. It is, perhaps, significant that there are almost as many points of reference between 4 and 6 a.m. as there are for the rest of the day. This may be chiefly due to striking contrasts caused by changes in relations of earth to sun during these two hours, but it may be noted, also, that the points of reference between them are more used in directing activities, such as starting on journeys, rising from sleep, tethering cattle in kraals, gazelle hunting, &c., than points of reference during most of the rest of the day, especially in the slack time between 1 and 3 p.m. There are also a number of terms to describe the time of night. They are to a very limited extent determined by the course of the stars. Here again, there is a richer terminology for the transition period between day and night than during the rest of the night and the same reasons may be suggested to explain this fact. There are also expressions for distinguishing night from day, forenoon from afternoon, and that part of the day which is spent from that part which lies ahead.

Except for the commonest of the terms for divisions of the day they are little used in comparison with expressions which describe routine diurnal activities. The daily timepiece is the cattle clock, the round of pastoral tasks, and the time of day and the passage of time through a day are to a Nuer primarily

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
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dry season, and as this was unusual it had occasioned much comment among the Nuer. When they heard of his death a number of them at once assigned that fact as the cause of these rains.

In December 1927 there was a total eclipse of the moon which caused much alarm among the Nuer. They felt sure that it meant destruction to them and to their country, for was it not dripping blood? Later on, when the patrol was put on in part of Nuerland, they felt that it was just the fulfilment of what they had foreseen when the moon was in eclipse.

There is a saying among the Nuer that when they have plenty to eat they want to fight. That year, too, had seen a good harvest, and fight they did. There seemed to be many personal scores and old feuds that must be attended to that year, and then they declared it was all because the moon had predicted a year of trouble for them.

Not many Nuer have any conception of a country besides their own and the land occupied by a neighbouring tribe. They recognize their chief and his authority, but do not seem to realize their need of a larger, higher governing power.

Their acquaintance with this higher authority is limited. They see their cattle taken for taxes, they usually are willing to bring their difficulties to the District Commissioner to be settled; they are willing to be relieved of their physical ailments to some extent, and usually welcome the Government doctor and his trained assistants whom he sends out during the dry season.

The Nuer does not—or says he does not—see any good in paying taxes. Some of them feel that giving their cattle up for taxes is submitting without protest to a raid from a representative of another country, and they feel that if the Government can collect taxes (or raid their

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
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538 The Nuer language has a wealth of animal and bird stories, tales of the origin of the tribe and folk-lore. Also games, songs, riddles, and superstitions. All of these are as yet practically untouched by the pen. A sort of cannibal-ogre combination, capable of changing into an animal, is usually a prominent character in their folk-lore.

192 The language contains no word for 'thank you' as far as I have delved into it, but one does not need to be in Nuerland long to discover that the Nuer has a word for 'I am mistaken', and is willing to use it.

TIME, SEASONS, MOON, AND STARS.

[805] ●821 The Nuer gauges time by moons, the light or dark of the moon. He knows the stars, and has names for many of the constellations. He is a keen observer of them and makes his own observations concerning them. Orion's belt is called 'gat rum juk'. One star is supposed to be a man leading a horse, the second star is supposed to be the horse, while the third star is another man driving the horse as he follows him.

The evening star is called 'Lipai chiing', as it is considered to be like a girl in the village waiting for the moon to come up and when it does come up, she goes away with it. Hence the name, which means 'wait in the village for the moon'.

The Southern Cross, the Little Dipper and other constellations are also noted and named.

825 805 The Nuer firmly believes, as already noted, that the cattle see the new moon the night before it is visible to the human eye. I have frequently asked them concerning this. The date upon which the cattle see the new moon always seems to be the date specified upon the calendar as the date when the new moon should be visible. Yet the Nuer has no calendar.

16: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1956
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×776 the sky in the expressions 'Spirit of the sky' and 'Spirit who is in the sky'. Moreover, it would even be a mistake to interpret 'of the sky' and 'in the sky' too literally.

×776 ●821 It would equally be a mistake to regard the association of God with the sky as pure metaphor, for though the sky is not God, and though God is everywhere, he is thought of as being particularly in the sky, and Nuer generally think of him in a spatial sense as being on high. Hence anything connected with the firmament has associations with him. Nuer sometimes speak of him as falling in the rain and of being in lightning and thunder. Mgr. Mlakic says that the rainbow is called the necklace of God.[1] I have never heard a spontaneous reference to the sun as a divine manifestation, but if one asks Nuer about it they say that it too belongs to God, and the moon and the stars also. They say that if a man sees the sun at night this is a divine manifestation, and one which is most dangerous for him; but I think that the light they say is occasionally seen is not regarded as an appearance of the physical sun but as some peculiar luminous vision. When Nuer see the new moon they rub ashes on their foreheads and they throw ashes, and perhaps also a grain of millet, towards it, saying some short prayer, as 'grandfather, let us be at peace' or 'ah moon, *nyadeang* (daughter of the air-spirit *deng*) we invoke (God) that thou shouldst appear with goodness. May the people see thee every day. Let us be (*akolapko*).' Mgr. Mlakic says that they mark their foreheads with ashes in the form of a cross and that it is called *ngei kwoth*, God's sign.[2] I must add that the language is here figurative, even playful. They may address the moon, but it is God to whom they speak through it, for the moon is not regarded, as such, as Spirit or as a person.

×776 It would be quite contrary to Nuer thought, as I have remarked, and it would even seem absurd to them, to say that sky, moon, rain, and so forth are in themselves, singly or collectively, God. God is Spirit, which, like wind and air, is invisible and ubiquitous. But though God is not these things he is in them in the sense that he reveals himself through them. In this sense, which I discuss further in Chapter V, he is in the sky, falls in the rain, shines in the sun and moon, and blows in the wind. These divine manifesta-

[1] *The Messenger*, 1943–4 (I have not seen the original articles but only a typewritten copy of them, so I cannot give page references).
[2] Ibid.

16: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1956
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kwoth goal, spirit of a lineage, is called on for aid, especially, I was told, by a man seeking refuge from enemies pursuing him. Most lineages seem to have at least one *colwic* patron spirit, to which cows are dedicated and their bull calves sacrificed. In their role of patrons of lineages they are similar to the totemic spirits, which I discuss in the following chapter, but they are treated in the present place, and not with the totemic spirits, partly because in other respects they obviously lack what are usually regarded as totemic characteristics, but chiefly because they are spoken about by Nuer as spirits of the above whereas totemic spirits are spirits of the below.

Although each *colwic* spirit, so long as it is remembered, retains its individuality in relation to its family and lineage, all of them are also conceived of as merged in God or in his hypostasis of *col*, the air-spirit of lightning. I have heard it said that *col* is black-haired and that this is the reason for calling a person killed by lightning a *colwic*. This suggestion, which is not entirely satisfactory grammatically, may have been put forward by the Nuer I was conversing with as a piece of *ad hoc* etymology deemed adequate to satisfy my curiosity,[1] but whether this is so or not, the first part of the word, *col*, means 'dark', and the spirit to which the word also refers is a spirit of storms; so in the word *colwic* there is an association of some kind with darkness and the suggestion made to me shows that Nuer are conscious of this.

Many people are killed by lightning, as memorials erected in their honour in villages bear witness, and it is therefore not surprising that Nuer are anxious when violent storms break over their homes and the sky is pierced by flashes of lightning. Then there is silence in the byres and one may see old men throw pieces of tobacco from the doorways into the storm, uttering a simple prayer, such as 'ah God, father, take this tobacco [or they may say "ox"]. I have paid thee ransom (*kok*) father [with this offering].

[1] Miss Soule informed Professor and Mrs. Seligman (op. cit., p. 238) that the expression is *colwec*, '*col* of the village community'. Father Crazzolara (op. cit., pp. 97–98) writes *colwic*, gen. *colwec*, but he does not give a literal translation of the expression. In my opinion the second syllable of the word is *wic*, gen. *wec*, 'head', and not *wec*, gen. *wic*, 'cattle-camp' or 'community'. Dr. Mary Smith tells me that she has heard Nuer speak of *coldoor* in reference to a person killed by lightning in the bush (*door*), though *colwic* is also used. On the other hand, some Nuer told her that people killed by lightning are called *colwic* because they do not have their heads shaved after death, as other people do. Clearly the syllables which compose the word have no definite meaning for Nuer.

16: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1956
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Come to earth gently, do not come with fury to thy grass [the thatched roof]. Come gently to thy grass. No one disputes with thee. It is thy universe. It is thy will, thine alone.' Or a man may take a mallet, used for driving tethering-pegs into the ground, lay it in the doorway to his byre, and, after asking God to 'rain well' for it is his universe, throw some ashes into the air in offering. Once when after a heavy storm I told a Nuer that should there be another storm of like severity I would desert my tent and take shelter in his byre he rebuked me, saying 'God does not wish the thunder to come like that again. You should not suggest it.'

When a person is killed by lightning Nuer are resigned. They say that God has struck him with his fire and that as God has taken him there is nothing to be said. God has taken the soul of the man to himself and 'he would be angry if he saw you grieving for the person whom he has taken'. The death is not a punishment for some fault but a mysterious act of divine will, almost what some theologians call an election. All death is ultimately attributed to God, but only in the sense of his being the first and necessary cause which operates through secondary and contingent causes. In the case of a *colwic*, however, God has chosen a particular person for himself and taken him with his own hand. Nuer say that the chosen person has entered into kinship, or friendship, with God.[1] For this reason a person struck by lightning does not receive an ordinary burial and the usual mortuary rites are not held for him. I was under the impression, and have elsewhere stated, that, nevertheless, the formal rules of mourning were observed, but Dr. Mary Smith tells me that this is not so, and what she says is more in accordance with what I have recorded above.[2]

A person is usually struck in his byre or hut and the walls of the burnt-out building are broken down over the body, and the

[1] In a published note on *colwic* (*Man*, 1949) I have translated a phrase, '*ca mar e kwoth*' by 'he has been brought into kinship with God'. As written it could mean this, but I now think that I may not have heard the words correctly and that what was said should be translated 'he was struck by God (with lightning)'. However, the idea of kinship, or friendship, with God was also expressed where the context allowed no room for misunderstanding.

[2] We find the same idea among the Shilluk. They do not bury or mourn a person killed by lightning. The death is an honour and the family feel that they have made an offering and will therefore prosper (the Rev. D. S. Oyler, 'Shilluk Notes', *Sudan Notes and Records*, 1926, pp. 58–59). Dr. Lienhardt tells me that the Dinka also do not mourn a person killed by lightning.

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sign of spiritual activity, as is also the birth of a calf with *ma cuany* markings.

We may conclude that Nuer totems tend to be creatures and things which for one or other reason easily evoke the idea of Spirit in any Nuer and are hence suitable symbols for Spirit in relation to lineages; and then the image of the symbol may become through association linked with other images, leading to additional totems. The Gaanwar clan have a special connexion with rain, which is a symbol of Spirit in its special relationship to their clan. The *nyuot*-tree is a secondary symbol which, on account of its peculiar appearance and habits, is associated in the Nuer mind with rain. The waterbuck and several species of fish are further symbols linked to the *nyuot*-tree as secondary totems because, we may presume, they also, in their different ways, are associated with water. An interpretation of the totemic relationship is here, then, not to be sought in the nature of the totem itself but in an association it brings to the mind. Similarly those who respect bees respect them not because they are bees but because their colour resembles to Nuer eyes the python, and it is probably the same with soldier ants and the tree cobra.

As we have seen, in their totemic relationships it is Spirit rather than the totems in which Nuer are interested. In so far as they are interested in the totems themselves it is not in their intrinsic nature but in their character as symbols through which Spirit manifests itself to human intelligence. Consequently, since the totemic attitude is neither derived from, nor primarily directed towards, the things as they are in themselves but the things as representing and manifesting Spirit, Nuer would not be at all surprised at anything being, or becoming, a totem. Anyone may at any time suddenly find himself in a totemistic relationship to some class of objects, and if for one reason or another his descendants trouble to remember and maintain the relationship, then that class becomes the totem of a lineage. Let us consider how Nuer think of totemic relationships coming about.

I have had frequent occasion to remark that those who respect a totem are Dinka or of Dinka origin, and our discussion of the whole problem of Nuer totemism is complicated, as was our discussion of the spirits of the air, by the fact that Nuer regard their totems as having for the most part come from the Dinka. I have often heard true Nuer say that when you find that a man respects